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8. A pushbutton user interface as in Claim 1, further comprising an activation sensing means for sensing an input to the pushbutton that produces an activation of the pushbutton.

5 10. A pushbutton user interface as in Claim 8, wherein
the preview sensing means senses motion of the pushbutton
along an axis that is different from an axis along which the
activation sensing means senses motion.

12. A pushbutton user interface as in Claim 1, wherein the interface enables a user to preview the effect of activating any of a multiplicity of pushbuttons, the pushbutton user interface further comprising means for identifying to which of the multiplicity of pushbuttons an input has been provided, wherein the preview sensing means is adapted to sense an input to the identified pushbutton that does not produce an activation of the identified pushbutton, and the preview display means is adapted to produce, in response to the sensed input, a display of a preview indicating the effect of activating the identified pushbutton.

30 preview sensing means for sensing an input to the
mechanical input apparatus that does not produce an
activation of the mechanical input apparatus; and

preview display means for displaying, in response to the sensed input, a preview indicating the effect of activating the mechanical input apparatus.

4. User interface apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the mechanical input apparatus comprises a pushbutton.

5. User interface apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the mechanical input apparatus comprises a touchpad.

6. A method for enabling a user to activate a pushbutton, comprising:
sensing an input to the pushbutton;
producing an activation of the pushbutton;
displaying, in response to the activation, a preview indicating the effect of activating the pushbutton.

7. A computer readable storage medium storing one or more computer programs for previewing the effect of activating a pushbutton, the one or more computer programs comprising:
instructions for sensing an input to the pushbutton that does not produce an activation of the pushbutton;
instructions for displaying, in response to the sensed input, a preview indicating the effect of activating the pushbutton.

5 the mechanical\input apparatus comprises a doorknob.

switching apparatus.

10 of activating a pushbutton, comprising the steps of:

sensing an input to the pushbutton that does not produce an activation of the pushbutton; and

15 displaying, in response to the sensed input, a
 preview indicating the effect of activating the
 pushbutton.

17. A computer readable storage medium or media on which is stored one or more computer programs for enabling a user to preview the effect of activating a pushbutton, the one or more computer programs comprising:

```

20      instructions for sensing an input to the pushbutton
      that does not produce an activation of the pushbutton;
      and

```

instructions for displaying, in response to the sensed input, a preview indicating the effect of activating the pushbutton.